



'Chaos agent': Suspected Trump hack comes as Iran flexes digital muscles ahead of US election

By DAVID KLEPPER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With less than three months before the U.S. election, Iran is intensifying its efforts to meddle in American politics, U.S. officials and private cybersecurity firms say, with the suspected hack of Donald Trump's campaign being only the latest and most brazen example.

Iran has long been described as a "chaos agent" when it comes to cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns and in recent months groups linked to the government in Tehran have covertly encouraged protests over Israel's war in Gaza, impersonated American activists and created networks of fake news websites and social media accounts primed to spread false and misleading information to audiences in the U.S.



Continued on Page 2 Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump talks at the Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections, Wednesday, Aug. 14, 2024, in West Palm Beach, Fla., after he voted early in person in the Florida primary.

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'Chaos agent': Suspected Trump hack comes as Iran flexes digital muscles ahead of US election

Continued from Front

While Russia and China remain bigger cyber threats against the U.S., experts and intelligence officials say Iran's increasingly aggressive stance marks a significant escalation of efforts to confuse, deceive and frighten American voters ahead of the election. The pace will likely continue to increase as the election nears and America's adversaries exploit the internet and advancements in artificial intelligence to sow discord and confusion. "We're starting to really see that uptick and it makes sense, 90 days out from the election," said Sean Minor, a former information warfare expert for the U.S. Army who now analyzes online threats for the cybersecurity firm Recorded Future, which has seen a sharp increase in cyber operations from Iran and other nations. "As we get closer, we suspect that these networks will get more aggressive." The FBI is investigating the suspected hack of the Trump campaign as well as efforts to infiltrate the campaign of President Joe Biden, which became Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign when Biden dropped out. Trump's campaign announced Saturday that someone illegally accessed and retrieved internal documents, later distributed to three news outlets. The campaign blamed Iran, noting a recent Microsoft report revealing an attempt by Iranian military intelligence to hack into the systems of one of the presidential campaigns. "A lot of people think it was Iran. Probably was," Trump said Tuesday on Univision before shrugging off the value of the leaked material. "I think it's pretty boring information." Iran has denied any involvement in the hack and said it has no interest in meddling with U.S. politics. That denial is disputed by U.S. intelligence officials and private cybersecurity firms who have linked Iran's government and military to



People wait to line to attend campaign rally with Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump in Asheville, N.C., Wednesday, Aug. 14, 2024.

Associated Press

several recent campaigns targeting the U.S., saying they reflect Iran's growing capabilities and its increasing willingness to use them. On Wednesday Google announced it had uncovered a group linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guard that it said had tried to infiltrate the personal email accounts of roughly a dozen people linked to Biden and Trump since May. The company, which contacted law enforcement with its suspicions, said the group is still targeting people associated with Biden, Trump and Harris. It wasn't clear whether the network identified by Google was connected to the attempt that Trump and Microsoft reported, or were part of a second attempt to infiltrate the campaign's systems. Iran has a few different motives in seeking to influence U.S. elections, intelligence officials and cybersecurity analysts say. The country seeks to spread confusion and increase polarization in the U.S. while undermining support for Israel. Iran also aims to hurt candidates that it believes would increase tension between Washington and Tehran. That's a description that fits Trump, whose administration ended a nuclear deal with Iran, reimposed sanc-

tions and ordered the killing of an Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani, an act that prompted Iran's leaders to vow revenge. The two leaders of the Senate intelligence committee issued a joint letter on Wednesday warning Tehran and other governments hostile to the U.S. that attempts to deceive Americans or disrupt the election will not be tolerated. "There will be consequences to interfering in the American democratic process," wrote the committee's chairman, Democratic Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, along with Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, the vice chairman. In 2021, federal authorities charged two Iranian nationals with attempting to interfere with the election the year before. As part of the plot, the men wrote emails claiming to be members of the far-right Proud Boys in which they threatened Democratic voters with violence. Last month, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines said the Iranian government had covertly supported American protests against Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza. Groups linked to Iran's government also posed as online activists, encouraged campus

protests and provided financial support to some protest groups, Haines said. Recent reports from Microsoft and Recorded Future have also linked Iran's government to networks of fake news websites and social media accounts posing as Americans. The networks were discovered before they gained much influence and analysts say they may have been created ahead of time, to be activated in the weeks immediately before the election. The final weeks before an election may be the most dangerous when it comes to foreign efforts to impact voting. That's when voters pay the most attention to politics and when false claims about candidates or voting can do the most damage. So-called 'hack-and-leak' attacks like the one reported by Trump's campaign involve a hacker obtaining sensitive information from a private network and then releasing it, either to select individuals, the news media or to the public. Such attacks not only expose confidential information but can also raise questions about cybersecurity and the vulnerability of critical networks and systems. Especially concerning for

elections, authorities say, would be an attack targeting a state or local election office that reveals sensitive information or disables election operations. Such an incursion could undermine trust in voting, even if the information exposed is worthless. Experts refer to this last possibility as a "perception hack," when hackers steal information not because of its value, but because they want to flaunt their capabilities while spreading fear and confusion among their adversaries. "That can actually be more of a threat — the spectacle, the marketing this gives foreign adversaries — than the actual hack," said Gavin Wilde, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and former National Security Council analyst who specializes in cyber threats. In 2016, Russian hackers infiltrated Hillary Clinton's campaign emails, ultimately obtaining and releasing some of the campaign's most protected information in a hack-and-leak that upended the campaign in its final weeks. Recent advances in artificial intelligence have made it easier than ever to create and spread disinformation, including lifelike video and audio allowing hackers to impersonate someone and gain access to their organization's systems. Nevertheless, the alleged hack of the Trump campaign reportedly involved much simpler techniques: someone gained access to an email account that lacked sufficient security protections. While people and organizations can take steps to minimize their vulnerability to hacks, nothing can eliminate the risk entirely, Wilde said, or completely reduce the likelihood that foreign adversaries will mount attacks on campaigns. "The tax we pay for being a digital society is that these hacks and leaks are unavoidable," he said. "Whether you're a business, a campaign or a government." □

Americans give Harris an advantage over Trump on honesty and discipline, an AP-NORC poll finds

By **LINLEY SANDERS** and
JONATHAN J. COOPER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris has a perceived advantage over former President Donald Trump on several leadership qualities such as honesty, a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds, although Americans are slightly more likely to trust Trump on the economy and immigration. Nearly half of Americans say that “committed to democracy” and “disciplined” are attributes that better describe Harris. About 3 in 10 say these qualities better describe Trump.

About 4 in 10 say Harris is someone who “cares about people like you” while about 3 in 10 say that about Trump. About 4 in 10 say “honest” better describes Harris and 24% say that quality better describes Trump. Both parties are racing to define Harris as she prepares to accept the Democratic nomination at the party’s convention next week. The poll suggests she carries some of the same baggage that weighed down President Joe Biden before he ended his reelection bid but has advantages over Trump when they’re compared to each other.



This combination of photos shows Vice President Kamala Harris, left, on Aug. 7, 2024 and Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump on July 31, 2024.

Associated Press

And Democrats continue to be much happier about her candidacy than they were about Biden’s.

Trump has spent the campaign championing himself as a strong leader who is capable of handling tough crises facing the country and suggesting that foreign leaders wouldn’t respect Harris in the White House. But he doesn’t have an advantage with Americans on that characteristic, according to the survey. Four in 10 U.S. adults see Trump as a strong leader, and

roughly the same share say that about Harris. About 4 in 10 say Trump is capable of handling a crisis, and a similar share say Harris is better positioned to do so.

Americans are about evenly divided between who they think is more capable of winning in November — Trump or Harris. In July, before Biden dropped out of the race, only about 2 in 10 Americans thought he was more capable of winning, while about twice as many thought that about Trump. “Trump had a better

chance when Joe Biden was running,” said Lisa Miller, a 42-year-old student in Elko, Nevada, and a Republican. “I think a lot of people who were insecure about Joe Biden are more secure with Kamala Harris’ age and cognitive abilities.” Trump has advantages on the economy and immigration

Americans are more likely to trust Trump over Harris when it comes to handling the economy or immigration, but the difference is slight — 45% say Trump is

better positioned to handle the economy, while 38% say that about Harris. The difference is similar in handling immigration. Independents are about twice as likely to trust Trump over Harris on economic issues, and they give him the advantage on immigration as well.

Howard Barnes, a 36-year-old artist in San Francisco, is a Republican who says he trusts Trump over Harris on the border.

“She doesn’t really seem to be proactive about it or even interested in it,” Barnes said.

Harris has more of an advantage over Trump when it comes to handling issues related to race and racial inequality, abortion policy, and health care. Roughly half of U.S. adults say Harris would do a better job than Trump handling each of those issues, compared with about 3 in 10 for Trump. Harris is especially strong among Democrats, independents and women on the issue of abortion policy. Democrats and independents give her the edge on health care, as well as on issues of race and racial inequality. About two-thirds of Black adults say Harris is the candidate they trust more on that issue, as well as about half of Hispanic adults and white adults. □

Hundreds able to return home after fleeing wildfire along California-Nevada line near Reno

By **SCOTT SONNER**

Associated Press

RENO, Nev. (AP) — Hundreds of people were allowed to return home Tuesday after being forced to flee a wildfire west of Reno that also shut down Interstate 80 along the California-Nevada line.

About 170 firefighters continued to work to secure the perimeter and snuff out hot spots near Verdi, a town 11 miles (17 kilometers) from downtown Reno. One home was destroyed by the fire that broke out Sunday evening and quickly burned through about



In this photo provided by Reno Firefighters Association Local 731, Reno firefighters battle a wildfire on Sunday, Aug. 11, 2024, near Verdi, Nev., just west of Reno.

Associated Press

one square mile (2.5 square kilometers) of brush and

timber. No one was seriously in-

jured. The Nevada state fire marshal is continuing to investigate the cause of the fire that started near the Gold Ranch exit of I-80 along the Truckee River about 2 miles (3.2 km) from the California line and 13 miles (21 km) west of Reno. Evacuation orders or warnings were issued for about 400 homes threatened by the flames Sunday night into Monday.

As many as 27,000 Nevada Energy customers didn’t have power at one point Sunday night after the utility shut off electricity as a precaution.

But by Tuesday it had been restored to all but about a dozen.

The fire was 8% contained Tuesday, according to the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District.

But aerial photos showed no active flames or significant smoke.

More than 300 firefighters who worked through Monday into Tuesday were able to secure the fire lines and will continue to conduct mop-up operations, the federal interagency fire team led by Commander Brad Milam said in a statement Tuesday. □

Suburban New York county bans masks meant to hide people's identities

MINEOLA, N.Y. (AP) — Suburban New York officials looking to stop violent protesters from obscuring their identities have banned wearing masks in public except for health or religious reasons.

Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman, a Republican, signed the legislation Wednesday, calling it a "bill that protects the public." Nassau County is on Long Island just east of New York City.

The county's Republican-controlled Legislature approved the ban on face coverings on Aug. 5. Legislator Howard Kopel said lawmakers were responding to "antisemitic incidents, often perpetrated by those in masks" since the Oct. 7 start of the Israel-Hamas war. The newly signed law makes it a misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine for any-



Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman, at podium, speaks during a news conference in Mineola, N.Y., March 6, 2024.

Associated Press

one in Nassau to wear a face covering to hide their identity in public. It exempts people who wear masks "for health, safety, religious or cultural purposes, or for the peaceful celebration of a holiday or similar religious or cultural event for which

masks or facial coverings are customarily worn." Blakeman said that while mask-wearing campus protesters were the impetus for the ban, he sees the new law as a tool to fight everyday crime as well. "This is a broad public safety

measure," Blakeman said at a news conference. "What we've seen is people using masks to shoplift, to carjack, to rob banks, and this is activity we want to stop." Civil libertarians have criticized the mask ban as an infringement on First

Amendment rights and an invitation to inequitable enforcement.

Susan Gottehrer, regional director of the New York Civil Liberties Union for Nassau, said in a statement that the law's "so-called health and religious exceptions" will allow police officers "who are not medical or religious experts, but who do have a track record of racially-biased enforcement — to determine who needs a mask and who doesn't, and who goes to jail."

Gottehrer said Blakeman "has chosen to chase a culture war over protecting the rights and well-being of his own residents."

Nassau County acted after New York's Democratic governor, Kathy Hochul, said in June that she was considering a ban on face masks in the New York City subway system. She did not follow up with a plan. □

Pennsylvania troopers stop drivers at similar rates no matter their race or ethnicity, study finds

By MARK SCOLFORO

Associated Press

HERSHEY, Pa. (AP) — Pennsylvania drivers were pulled over and cited by state police last year at roughly comparable rates for various races and ethnicities, according to information about 450,000 vehicle stops that was made public on Wednesday.

"The findings across multiple analyses demonstrated no substantive racial and ethnic differences in the initial reason for the stop by the Pennsylvania State Police," Robin Engel, a researcher now at Ohio State, said in releasing the \$194,000 study at the state police academy in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Researchers also found that trooper decisions about how to enforce the law after they stop someone are most strongly based on legal factors and not the drivers' or troopers' race or ethnicity.

However, troopers in the field were slightly more likely to engage in "discretionary" searches of Black drivers' vehicles than those of



Pennsylvania State troopers pull over vehicles, Sept. 4, 2020, along the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Breezewood, Pa.

Associated Press

white or Latino drivers when the drivers' criminal histories were factored in, the report said.

Troopers do not ask drivers their race or ethnicity but record that information based on their subjective perceptions.

The state police and the American Civil Liberties Union in Pennsylvania two years ago agreed to settle

a federal civil rights complaint alleging that seven troopers targeted Latino drivers for vehicle stops and detained them to check their immigration status. The 10 people who sued, all Latino, said troopers demanded "papers" from drivers and passengers. To settle the case, the Pennsylvania State Police enacted a regulation

prohibiting troopers from stopping anyone based on immigration status, citizenship or nationality, and stopping them from questioning people about their immigration status unless answers are needed for a criminal investigation unrelated to civil immigration laws.

The new report on traffic stops echoed last year's

findings that racial and ethnic disparities in Pennsylvania State Police traffic stops have become rare, likely because of increased scrutiny and supervision in the field. Authorities have also changed training tactics and prioritized treating people equally.

In an effort to make their work more transparent, state police have also been expanding the use of body cameras. Nearly half the force is now equipped to wear them.

Wider information about Pennsylvania traffic stops may soon become available. A law passed by the Legislature in May mandates other local police departments that serve populations of at least 5,000 people also must collect and make public traffic stop data. The measure takes effect at the end of next year.

Rep. Napoleon Nelson, D-Montgomery, chair of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus, called the newly released data "neither comforting nor extremely surprising." □

Japan's Kishida announces he will not run in September, paving the way for a new prime minister

By MARI YAMAGUCHI

Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, in a surprise move Wednesday, announced he will not run in the upcoming party leadership vote in September, paving the way for Japan to have a new prime minister.

Kishida was elected president of his governing Liberal Democratic Party and became prime minister in 2021. His three-year term expires in September and whoever wins the party vote will succeed him as prime minister because the LDP controls both houses of parliament. A new face is a chance for the party to show that it's changing for the better, and Kishida said he will support the new leader.

"We need to clearly show an LDP reborn," Kishida told a news conference on Wednesday. "In order to show a changing LDP, the most obvious first step is for me to bow out."

"I will not run for the upcoming party leadership election," he said.

Stung by his party's corruption scandals, Kishida has



Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida speaks during a press conference at his office in Tokyo as he announced he will not run in the upcoming party leadership vote in September, Wednesday, Aug. 14, 2024.

suffered dwindling support ratings that have dipped below 20%.

Regaining public trust in politics is crucial for tackling difficult situations in and outside Japan, he said and called on aspiring party lawmakers to run for leadership and hold active policy debates during the campaign.

"Once a new leader is decided, I hope to see everyone unite and form a dream team to achieve politics that can gain public understanding," he said. Kishida said he has been mulling the resignation for some time but waited to put his key policies on track, including an energy policy that calls for a return

to nuclear power, a drastic military buildup to deal with security threats in the region, and improving ties with South Korea, as well as political reforms.

The U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Rahm Emanuel, praised Kishida's effort in elevating the U.S.-Japan alliance to a new level by working closely with Presi-

dent Joe Biden especially in security, while also developing separate trilaterals, one with South Korea and another with the Philippines, in the face of China's growing influence.

Biden and Kishida "literally wrote the organizing chapter of the next era," Emanuel said.

However, the leader of the main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party, Kenta Izumi, said Kishida may have given up on pursuing party reforms and the probe into the corruption scandals.

"Whenever the party is in crisis, LDP, for its own survival, has repeatedly changed prime minister and party leader to reset and have voters forget the past," Izumi said. "It's their strategy and people should not be tricked by it."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had no comment on the announcement but U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said that "certainly, the secretary-general has been very pleased to be working with prime minister Kishida during his time in office." □

Associated Press

American handed a 15-day sentence by a Moscow court on charges of disorderly conduct

MOSCOW (AP) — A court in the Russian capital on Wednesday handed a 15-day sentence to a U.S. citizen on charges of minor disorderly conduct.

Moscow's District Court ordered the American, identified as Joseph Tater, to spend 15 days under administrative arrest on "petty hooliganism" charges. Earlier Wednesday, Russia's Investigative Committee, the country's top criminal investigation agency, said that it had opened a criminal case against an unidentified U.S. citizen accused of attacking a police officer.

Russian state news agencies Tass and RIA-Novosti

said that the American became abusive after being asked to show his documents at an upscale hotel on Monday evening. They claimed that the American "behaved aggressively" and used profanities when the hotel refused to accommodate him, citing a lack of required documents. The reports said that the man attacked a police officer when he was taken to a police precinct. Officials at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow said they were aware of the reports, but wouldn't make further comments because of privacy restrictions.

Several Americans are serving sentences in Russia

on drug or theft convictions.

A U.S.-Russian dual national, Ksenia Khavana, is expected to be sentenced on Thursday after pleading guilty in a closed trial to raising money for Ukraine's military. Prosecutors called for a 15-year term.

In the largest Russia-West prisoner exchange since the end of the Cold War, Russia this month released Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich and American corporate security executive Paul Whelan, both of whom were imprisoned on espionage convictions. Russia also released U.S.-Russian dual national Alsu Kurma-

sheva, a Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe journalist sentenced to 6½ years for

spreading "false information" about the Russian military. □



In this photo released by Meshchansky District Court press service on Wednesday, Aug. 14, 2024, U.S. citizen Joseph Tater stands in a courtroom facing criminal assault charges after allegedly attacking a police officer in a Moscow hotel.

Associated Press

Vatican expels founder of Peru's Sodalitium religious movement after probe into abuses, corruption

By **NICOLE WINFIELD**
Associated Press

ROME (AP) — The Vatican on Wednesday expelled the founder of an influential Peruvian religious movement, the Sodalitium Christianae Vitae, after more than a decade of downplaying allegations of sexual and psychological abuse and financial corruption. The decree from the Vatican's office for religious orders came after Pope Francis last year ordered a high-level investigation into the Sodalitium by the Vatican's top sex abuse experts to get to the bottom of the scandal. Previous commissions and investigations had failed to fully address the group's problems. According to the decree, which was posted on the website of the Peruvian bishops conference, Francis gave his explicit authorization to expel Luis Fernando Figari from the movement, even though canon law didn't precisely cover his alleged misconduct. Figari's behavior was "incompatible and therefore



Archbishop Charles Scicluna, left, and Spanish Monsignor Jordi Bertomeu, right, walk to a press conference in Santiago, Chile, on June 19, 2018.

Associated Press

unacceptable in a member of a church institution, as well as causing scandal and serious damage to the good of the church and of the individual members of the faithful," it said. The expulsion would restore justice

harmed by Figari's behavior "over many years, and would protect in the future the individual good of the faithful and the church," it said. Figari founded the movement in 1971 as a lay com-

munity to recruit "soldiers for God," one of several Catholic societies born as a conservative reaction to the left-leaning liberation theology movement that swept through Latin America, starting in the 1960s. At

its height, the group counted about 20,000 members across South America and the United States. It was enormously influential in Peru.

Victims of Figari's abuse complained to the Lima archdiocese in 2011, though other claims against him date to 2000. But neither the local church nor the Holy See took concrete action until one of the victims, Pedro Salinas, wrote a book along with journalist Paola Ugaz detailing the twisted practices of the Sodalitium "Half Monks, Half Soldiers," in 2015.

The Sodalitium later commissioned an outside investigation that found Figari was "narcissistic, paranoid, demeaning, vulgar, vindictive, manipulative, racist, sexist, elitist and obsessed with sexual issues and the sexual orientation" of Sodalitium's members.

The outside investigation, published in 2017, found that Figari sodomized his recruits and forced them to fondle him and one another. □

Mexico's president to send diplomatic note over U.S. funding for a Mexican anti-corruption NGO

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's president lashed out at U.S. funding for a Mexican anti-corruption nonprofit group Wednesday, and said he will send a diplomatic note to the U.S. government in protest. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador claimed the group is part of the conservative opposition, and shouldn't receive foreign funding or tax deductible contributions. He published detailed financial information on the group and vowed to send a bill to Congress to change the rules on tax deductible contributions. "I think that there is open intervention by the U.S. government in the sovereign affairs of Mexico," López Obrador said. He sent a similar protest note in 2021,

with no apparent result. The U.S. State Department generally does not comment on diplomatic correspondence. According to documents presented at the presi-

dent's morning news briefing, a small amount of funding for the group about \$685,000 came from U.S. charitable foundations over the last eight years. A larger chunk about \$5

million in recent years allegedly came from the U.S. Agency for International Development, which is administered by the State Department.

López Obrador has complained about the funding for years and said he would also write a letter to U.S. President Joe Biden. "I am sure he has not been informed about this situation," the Mexican president said. But López Obrador already sent a similar letter to Biden in 2023.

López Obrador said he will also ask prosecutors and tax authorities to investigate the donations. The group, Mexicans Against Corruption and Impunity, denies that it is allied with any political party. The group monitors government spending and

programs for abuses. It was founded three years before López Obrador took office and has criticized previous governments and other parties.

The organization has issued reports critical of some of López Obrador's major initiatives, including the cancellation of a partially built Mexico City airport and the construction of a costly tourist train around the Yucatan Peninsula.

The group's founder, Claudio X. González, has openly endorsed opposition candidates in the past.

USAID often supports civil society groups, usually related to human rights or democracy promotion, in many countries. In some nations, such groups sometimes run afoul of local governments. □



Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador meets with his security cabinet at the National Place in Mexico City, Friday, Aug. 2, 2024.

Associated Press

On August 24th, Aruba will officially celebrate 200 years of Oranjestad

The celebration of Oranjestad's 200th anniversary is quickly approaching, an event that Stichting Rancho has been promoting and organizing for some time. Clifford Rosa, president of Stichting Rancho, elaborated further on the celebration and what to expect.

In connection with the 200th anniversary of Oranjestad, on May 24th, the foundation announced that they signed an agreement to use the Nikky Habibe building in Oranjestad, which will serve as the information center for the celebration.

Rosa explained that this location is special not only because it was a donation from a local merchant but also because of its historical significance, as it was one of the first supermarkets in Oranjestad.

He continued to explain that August 24th is the day they will celebrate Oranjestad's 200th anniversary. He noted that since the information center opened, they have received many visitors due to the first exhibition by the National Archives, which, along with the foundation's own portraits, illustrates the past and present. Visitors can see the difference between what Oranjestad used to be and what it has become today.

Rosa emphasized that the celebration is not just about the past and histo-



ry, but they are also thinking about what the future holds for Oranjestad. "In this regard, we are doing our work to raise awareness in our community and also engage with our community to gather more information from the people who have lived in Oranjestad," he said.

He explained that while they have information in their archives, it often does not provide the full content of what people have experienced. He mentioned that just as they did in Rancho to learn more about the history and past of Ran-

cho and to see what happened in that historic part, they are now doing the same for Oranjestad. "All of this is so we can celebrate something unique, the 200th anniversary of Oranjestad," he added.

Rosa remarked that the historical information about Oranjestad is important because they are planning for the future of Oranjestad, considering it is the capital of Aruba. He emphasized that as the capital, the city needs proper regulations and active management of the urban system, which is what Stichting Rancho is

working hard on, to ensure the capability to manage Oranjestad and make it a protected city.

"The heritage, the monuments need attention, but their history is also very important to be well documented, and that is what we are doing here at the center," he stressed.

Regarding cooperation with government departments, he mentioned that they have received support from these departments, but as for the government itself, he added that there has not been much cooperation because the foundation was informed that the government would not have much time for this celebration.

However, he highlighted that since the celebration will last a whole year, after August 24th, there could still be a process of cooperation. "A process where you have a year of celebration and many things will happen, with more awareness and education about our history, our heritage, and that is necessary," he emphasized.

Rosa indicated that they are open to providing information to various institutions and schools. He ex-

plained that they recently did a presentation together with the National Library at the homes of the elderly to see if the material they created for the presentation is suitable for educational purposes.

Unfortunately, he mentioned that they currently do not have volunteers or the manpower to go to schools or other places to give their presentations because all of this work requires a lot of planning to organize visits to schools or to bring schools to the center for a presentation.

For now, the information center is open every Friday from 6 PM onwards, where locals come to share information.

He added that if they manage to find volunteers, the goal is to open the information center from 10 AM to 2 PM, which coincides with the tram's operating hours, as this could bring both locals and tourists.

The foundation's mission is to create a joyful union and involve everyone connected to Aruba in one way or another, to contribute together and celebrate in an epic and unique way the bicentennial of Oranjestad this year. □





Papillon: Where Culinary Tradition Sparks with Timeless Elegance



Tucked away in the vibrant heart of the Village for over a decade and a half, Papillon isn't just a restaurant; it's a culinary adventure waiting to unfold. Picture this: a sanctuary where the flavors of the French Caribbean have danced harmoniously with classic French fare for the past 15 years, all set against the backdrop of a movie-inspired ambiance that's as enchanting as it is welcoming.

Located in the heart of Palm Beach and within walking distance from hotels and local markets in the area, Papillon takes the famous story of a French man experiencing the flavors and culture of the Caribbean and incorporates these aspects of the Caribbean touch into their French culinary repertoire. Step through the doors of the newly-expanded Papillon, and you're not just stepping into a dining establishment; you're stepping into a world where sophistication embraces you like an old friend. The decor, a homage to the allure of the iconic film, casts a spell of intimacy and comfort, urging you to settle in and relish every moment. Here, dining isn't just about sustenance; it's about indulging in an experience meticulously crafted to ignite your senses.

At the heart of Papillon's magic lies its menu – a symphony of flavors orchestrated by culinary artisans. Imagine savoring the decadent richness of foie gras or the sublime delicacy of frog legs, each dish a love letter to tradition infused with a dash of innovation. And oh, the spectacle of the Dover sole being expertly prepared table-side! It's culinary theater at its finest, leaving you spellbound with every bite. All this served with a backdrop of the Caribbean ambience, complete with live musical performances and an inviting and colorful twist to your dinner experience!

But wait, there's more! Enter the realm of the Chef's Table, a weekly extravaganza led by the maestro himself, Executive Chef Juan Ludeña. Prepare to be whisked away on a six-course odyssey, each dish meticulously paired with wines handpicked from the largest French wine selection on the island by the esteemed Maitre d' Michael Otten. It's a soirée reserved for those who truly appreciate the artistry of gastronomy – an exquisite symphony for the palate.



In essence, Papillon isn't just a restaurant; it's an oasis for epicurean explorers. It's where passion meets refinement, where every dish is a masterpiece waiting to be savored, and every moment is a celebration of the finer things in life. So if you're craving the warmth of French Caribbean delights, Papillon invites you to join them on an unforgettable journey for the senses. Bon appétit!

Papillon is located in Palm Beach in front of the Hilton Resort, and open from 5pm to 10pm. Early Bird takes places from 5pm to 7pm. For reservations or more information please contact the restaurant at +297 699 5400, e-mail them at info@papillonaruba.com or visit their website at papillonaruba.com



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Food culture in Aruba

(Oranjestad) - Like many other cultures, an important aspect of the Aruban cultural identity is our connection to food and food traditions. The local food traditions consist of a melting pot of different cultural and religious eating habits and dishes.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

The routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner on the island is one that does not completely follow a European or American routine, despite the major influences from these parts of the world on our culture and way of living. When it comes to the three important meals of the day, most of the Aruban population follows a Latin-American influenced routine.

Breakfast

Breakfast in Aruba is quite simple: a cup of coffee or tea, some bread, and sometimes an egg. Sometimes, due to the need of a quick "to-go" breakfast, you may also find many snack trucks and cafes that sell sandwiches, pastechis (meat pie), arepas and empanadas early in the morning.

Main Meal

The main meal is typically eaten in most households around noon or in the afternoon. This can consist of meat, fish, and chicken—stewed or fried—with funchi (polenta) or rice with stewed vegetables. Often, fried or boiled plantain or pan bati (Aruban pancake) is included. Stews are a staple in Aru-

ban cuisine and can be largely influenced by Latin-American and Latin/Afro-Caribbean Stews. Some of the more unique stews and soups from the ABC Islands* include sopi di bonchi cora (red kidney bean soup with pig tail), sopi mondongo (tripe soup), carni stoba (beef stew), comcomber stoba (West Indian gherkin stew) and much more.

Dinner Time

Dinner time can vary significantly from household to household. Unlike the U.S. or in Europe, dinner time typically does not consist of a whole (warm) meal. Instead, the evening "meal" can typically consist of something lighter, like a sandwich, though it is not uncommon to see leftovers from the main meal reheated and eaten again. Tea and coffee are often also served with the evening snack.

(Religious) Holidays

Christmas is probably the biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-American influences, most notably from Venezuela. Ayacas and the famous pan di ham* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items. Traditional drinks include ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with

peanut butter), and home-made fruit punch. Desserts include, bolo di pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo di cashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (dark fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.

Snacks and tasty delights

Besides meals and dishes that are eaten on the dinner table, Aruba also has a food tradition that includes snacks and other tasty delights that you may easily find around the island. These include, Saco*, bas-

ket, pastechi, kroket, deditos, Johnny cake and more. These snacks are usually sold at local snack trucks and cafes, often located on the side of the road. In the area of Tanki Leendert and Tanki flip, for example, there are many of these trucks parked on the side of the road and often open until late at night—offering tasty and filling snacks post night-life fun. □

*ABC Islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao

*Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de Jamon



(rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives)

*Saco: Saco literally means "bag". Saco contains fried potatoes, plantains, chicken (and ribs) and a Johnny cake, served in a paper bag.

Source: Voeding, voedingsgewoonten en gerechten op Aruba (Nutrition, Food Traditions and Dishes on Aruba) by Biblioteca Nacional Aruba

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“Take your car off the beaten track to meet our monuments and their stories”



ORANJESTAD — The mix of cultures in Aruba is very visible in its architecture as -like in all cultures-, monuments reflect your history and your people. If you take the chance to leave the beach for a little while and take your car off the beaten track you will be surprised what you see. Anne Witsenburg is director of the Monument Fund Aruba (SMFA) and points out precisely why a monumental trip should not lack in your vacation's itinerary.

The fund owns 15 monuments, out of the 36 protected monuments in the island. “But there are over 300 more monuments on the list to be protected and of course we dream to see that become real-

ity as soon as possible.” The international guidelines that apply for monuments decide whether it will be a protected monument or not. “The building or object needs to be at least 50 years old, a special value in architecture or to history or to the people of Aruba is required and there has to be a certain uniqueness. If it was changed too much throughout time or there are already any of the same kind it is a no go.”

Useless islands

There is a difference between the islands when it comes to monuments, as Witsenburg explains. “That goes back to their history. Curacao used to be a very wealthy island where many -mainly Dutch- merchants

lived close together and that is the reason you find this typical colonial Dutch style buildings packed in certain areas nowadays. They have more than 20 years of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) heritage. Than scattered around the rest of the island you will see the smaller country houses.” Aruba and Bonaire were called the useless islands in the colonial time, so any Indian willing to live here was given a small piece of land to build his home. “That is the reason you find all these typical small houses scattered around the island. We actually have the same amount of monuments as Curacao though way smaller.”

Magic local touch

Some of the monuments owned by the Monument Fund Aruba are the light house, town hall, water tanks in both Oranjestad and San Nicolas. “We are wealthy in different styled monuments and my suggestion is to discover this world outside of the tourist zone. The book Monumental Guide comes in handy as there are three maps inside that guide you to the monuments and tell you about them. But there are also possibilities to have your personal people guide. And the best is that I can almost guarantee you the magic of the local touch when you bump into an authentic cunucu house (country house) and talk to the owners. They will proudly share their family history with you.”

Outside inspiration

The Monument Fund acquires or buys monuments and restores them back into their former glory. Than they rent it out. “That sounds easy, but it is incredibly complex as most monuments have multiple owners due to the fact that inheritances are split and all need to decide upon the selling.” They cooperate with the government office of monuments be-



cause they set the rules of what you can and cannot do to a protected monument. “We also have the task to maintain the buildings which is an ongoing process. The wind, the salt in the air and the sun that not only burns human bodies but also buildings are huge challenges. Next to that we do education, create awareness and maintain public relations about our monuments.”

The office of the Monument Fund is actually located in a monument itself. The building is beautiful and has a tropical style. “This house goes back to the 1920's when it was built as a vacation house by Aruban entrepreneur Croes. He and his family came here to the outdoors as in those times there was only cunucu (countryside) here. They had big parties and enjoyed leisure time with family and friends.” Richer Arubans at that time looked outwards for architecture inspiration as that was considered chic, Witsenburg explains. Either to the US (art deco style like the water tower in San Nicolas), Holland (Dutch colonial style) or Colombia/Venezuela. “This house is inspired by a villa around Cartagena, Colombia. The ideas mostly came from the wives”, she says laughing.

Sustainable driven

Sustainability is a big thing to the Monument Fund Aruba. Witsenburg: “Obviously to restore old buildings and not destroy them to build new ones is already sustainable in itself. Than we have the technical sustainability as in using the right materials and techniques but also the social sustainability. That includes looking at the non-tangible part of heritage: the stories to be told, the music to be played, the dinners that were cooked in the places we try to restore. That keeps it alive. Most of our monuments are meant to be lived in so we would like to reintroduce the joy of living in a monument. We work together with private companies to look into that.” In their office they installed solar panels, use LED lightning and recently implemented an electrical charging point for electric vehicles.

The Monument Fund Aruba is open every day from Monday to Friday from 8am to 5pm. You are more than welcome to ask for information, guiding and help. For more information check out their Facebook page stichting monumenten fonds aruba and the website <http://www.monumentenfondsaruba.com>. □



Snakes you may encounter on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—If you have ever or will ever go off-roading on the island, you may encounter three types of snakes that are dominant on the island. The Cascabel, Santanero and Boa differ from each other in a couple ways, and local perspective on each one may help you understand what you need to do if you ever were to encounter one during your touring session on the island.

Cascabel (*Crotalus unicolor*)

The small Cascabel or Aruba Island Rattlesnake averages 70 cm in length. The body color is often uniform gray or light brown. There may be a faint pattern of diamond shaped markings on the back. This pattern is most noticeable on younger snakes. The most distinctive feature of this snake is the rattle at the end of its tail which makes a buzzing sound when the snake is alarmed. Cascabels are shy and not aggressive, but their venom can be dangerous to humans. In fact, it's the only venomous snake native to the island. It is best to leave this snake

alone. Do not attempt to catch or kill it, as it could not only be dangerous, but this snake is also endemic to the island, and its preservation has become a legal mandate for all residents and visitors.

Cascabels hunt by waiting under bushes and fruiting trees to catch passing lizards, mice, rats, small rabbits, and an occasional bird. This is often considered to be one of the rarest rattlesnakes in the world. The range of the Cascabel is restricted to the rugged and mountainous areas of the island mostly within Arikok National Park. The Arikok National Park was designated in the early 1980s to include most of the rattlesnake's population, providing a safe refuge in which the snake can be protected and monitored. The government has also implemented outreach and education initiatives to change local perception of the snake and highlight its ecological and economic importance – it is now being promoted as a national symbol. Arikok's partnership with the Toledo zoo has safeguarded the



rattlesnake ex-situ and led to a number of research projects collecting critical data on the Cascabel's abundance, life history and habitat requirement to help guide future conservation efforts.

Santanero

The slender Santanero or Aruban Cat-eyed Snake is a small fella, typically less than 50 cm long. This snake is recognizable by the large scales on the top of its head and by its pattern of dark brown bands alternating with light brown bands. The belly is plain white or cream colored without any markings. Native as well to the island, this snake is shy and not aggressive. However, it has enlarged teeth at the back of its mouth and mild venom which is not dangerous to humans, but can paralyze small lizards and frogs. Santaneros are most active at night when they search for food. During the day, they hide under rocks or leaves. They frequently climb trees and cactus. Santaneros eat toads, frogs, insects, and lizards. You may find Santaneros near dams during periods of rainy weather or crossing roads at night. This snake is found island wide. A Santanero in your garden will keep away the unwanted insects. If you encounter a Santanero around your garden, please do not

harm this species.

Boa (*Boa constrictor*)

Boas are Aruba's largest snakes. The longest Boa found on the island was slightly less than 3 m. Newborn Boas average 35 cm. Boas are not venomous but are what is called constrictor snakes; they kill by wrapping themselves around a prey and suffocating them. The most distinctive feature of a Boa is its pattern of dark brown and tan blotches which become red toward the tail. The belly is white or cream colored with numerous black spots. Boas are excellent climbers and may be found in trees and cactus. Boas also hide in the leaves under bushes waiting to catch prey that pass. Boas catch their prey

with their teeth and then constrict it in their coils. The Boa's diet consists of birds, lizards, rats, mice, and rabbits. Large Boas have been known to eat small goats and chickens. When threatened, Boas will hiss loudly.

Boas are a non-native species and are invasive to the island, risking the population of native lizards and birds. The first Boas were reported on the island in 1999. Since that time they have been found across the entire island in all types of habitats. If you ever encounter a Boa, please do not approach it. Instead, please call the Arikok National Park, as they are experienced in handling Boas. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

45 Sports figure

1 Bakery buy

5 Hire

11 Soprano instrument

12 Good hit

13 Nuisance

14 Tailored sleeve detail

15 Canines

17 Doctor's charge

18 Peeved states

22 Flint product

24 Veep Agnew

25 Honolulu souvenir

26 — de plume

27 Extreme

30 Pigeon's perch

32 One of the Barry-mores

33 Clumsy one

34 Lazy person

38 Duplicates

41 Honolulu do

42 Grove growth

43 Avenue liners

44 Prepares for a blow

DOWN

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3 Give up

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6 River parts

7 Workout exercise

8 Wt. units

9 Flamenco cry

10 To date

16 Mouse-spotting cry

19 Nitpick

VOTE SALAAM
ABOUT UGANDA
SORE MENTOR
TEN FUNK
ERUPT BRA
CEDAR SQUAB
ATOZ URGE
TRUER JANET
SET EXUDE
FLAG DEB
THORAX YOYO
HAWAII EURO
EMENDS STEM

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22 Turn

23 Hide

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29 State

30 Piece of

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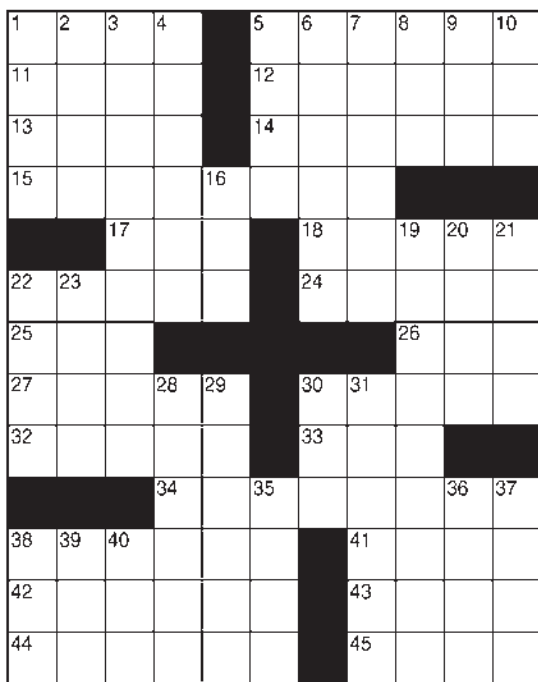
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5-23

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-23

CRYPTOQUOTE

OG XYT FJOYJOEOMD XYTJWDBG,

XYT UJD ZYOSZ EY WUAD

XYTJWDBG. — ZUVJODBB

TSOYS

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: USE WHAT TALENTS YOU POSSESS; THE WOODS WOULD BE VERY SILENT IF NO BIRDS SANG THERE EXCEPT THOSE THAT SANG BEST. — HENRY VAN DYKE

Cruise ship Schedule: August 6 - 27 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
TUE	06	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL HORIZON CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS	08.00 09.00 13.00	20.00 22.00 23.00	B C I	1 1 1
WED	07	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	13	CELEBRITY BEYOND CARNIVAL CELEBRATION CARNIVAL VISTA	08.00 08.00 13.00	21.00 22.00 23.00	B C I	1 1 1
THU	14	ENCHANTED PRINCESS	08.00	18.00	C	1
WED	20	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1
WED	27	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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NASA still deciding whether to keep 2 astronauts at space station until next year

By **MARCIA DUNN**
AP Aerospace Writer
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)

— NASA said Wednesday it's still deciding whether to keep two astronauts at the International Space Station until early next year and send their troubled Boeing capsule back empty. Rather than flying Boeing's Starliner back to Earth, Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams would catch a ride on SpaceX's next flight. That option would keep them at the space station until next February. The test pilots anticipated being away just a week or so when they rocketed away as Starliner's first crew. But thruster failures and helium leaks marred the capsule's trip to the space station, raising doubts about its ability to return safely and leaving the astronauts in limbo. NASA officials said they're analyzing more data before making a decision by end of next week or beginning of the next. These thrusters are crucial for holding the capsule in the right position when it comes time to descend from orbit.

"We've got time available before we bring Starliner home and we want to use that time wisely," said Ken Bowersox, NASA's space operations mission chief. NASA's safety chief Russ DeLoach added: "We don't have enough insight and data to make some sort of simple, black-and-white calculation."

DeLoach said the space agency wants to make room for all opinions unlike what happened on NASA's two shuttle tragedies, Challenger and Columbia, when dissenting views were ignored.

"That may mean, at times, we don't move very fast because we're getting everything out, and I think you can kind of see that at play here," he said.

Switching to SpaceX would require bumping two of the four astronauts assigned to the next ferry flight, currently targeted for late



NASA astronauts Suni Williams, left, and Butch Wilmore stand together for a photo enroute to the launch pad at Space Launch Complex 41 Wednesday, June 5, 2024, in Cape Canaveral, Fla., for their liftoff on the Boeing Starliner capsule to the international space station.

Associated Press

September. Wilmore and Williams would take the empty seats in SpaceX's Dragon capsule once that half-year mission ends.

Another complication: The space station has just two parking places for U.S. capsules. Boeing's capsule would have to depart ahead of the arrival of SpaceX's Dragon in order to free up a spot.

Boeing maintains Starliner could still safely bring the astronauts home. The company earlier this month posted a list of testing done on thrusters in space and on the ground since liftoff.

NASA would like to keep SpaceX's current crew up there until the replacements arrive, barring an emergency. Those four should have returned to Earth this month, but saw a seventh month added to their mission because of the uncertainty over Starliner, keeping them up there until the end of September. Most space station stays last six months, although some have gone a full year.

Wilmore and Williams are retired Navy captains who spent months aboard the space station years ago.

They eased into space station work as soon as they arrived, helping with experiments and repairs. □



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Vince Vaughn, 'Ted Lasso' co-creator Bill Lawrence bring good fun to Carl Hiaasen's 'Bad Monkey'

By **ALICIA RANCILIO**
Associated Press

There's an old saying "don't meet your heroes" but for TV creator, showrunner Bill Lawrence, it was a dream come true. Lawrence's new series "Bad Monkey" for Apple TV+, premiering Wednesday, is based on a novel by Carl Hiaasen, one of his favorite authors.

"I started reading Carl Hiaasen books when I was 15-years-old. There's a direct line from Carl's surreal satires and wildly insane character pieces to, like, 'Scrubs,'" explained Lawrence, who also created that long-running Zach Braff sitcom. "The guy helped me to be a storyteller. He turned out to be as cool as I hoped and such a good dude."

"Bad Monkey" stars Vince Vaughn, whose observational humor and quick one-liners make him a good fit for the writing styles of both Hiaasen and Lawrence.

Vaughn plays Andrew Yancy, a former Miami police detective now living in the Florida Keys and working as a restaurant inspector. (A scene where we see Yancy on the job leads to a running joke about how he's lost his appetite for the foreseeable future and is Vaughn at his reactionary



Natalie Martinez, from left, Vince Vaughn, standing background, Meredith Hagner, Charlotte Lawrence and Ronald Peet, cast members in the Apple TV+ series "Bad Monkey," pose together at the Four Seasons Hotel, Tuesday, Aug. 6, 2024, in Los Angeles.

finest.) A friend asks Yancy for a favor: deliver a human arm that washed up on the beach to a medical examiner (played by Natalie Martinez). When he later meets Eve (Meredith Hagner), the widow of the man whom the arm belonged to, Yancy finds himself unable to shake the case. The story unfolds, touching on themes of greed and power.

"He can't let himself leave

something where he knows there's some wrongdoing there," Vaughn said about Yancy, who he describes as "like the Energizer Bunny." "He can't help himself. And then no matter how many times he falls, gets hit in the face, or things don't go his way, he's going to just keep marching forward. That's just such an inspirational quality to have."

Vaughn goes back more than 25 years with Law-

rence they played poker together. "He used to make me laugh. Just to watch his career do so well from afar, it was easy for me," Vaughn said about agreeing to the role. For Lawrence, he said Vaughn's 1996 indie movie "Swingers" "helped shape a generation of writers. "When he burst onto the screen saying, 'You're so money you don't even know it,' everyone wanted to write that type of dia-

logue."

Michelle Monaghan plays Bonnie, Yancy's sort-of girlfriend who flits in and out of his life. She's a minor presence in the novel and Monaghan credits Lawrence for fleshing out her story.

"She's equal parts very delusional but also very naive," said Monaghan, laughing. "When we first meet her she's very fun, playful and aloof but as the show goes on we see she's also quite predatory. ... Bill creates characters that do outrageous things."

When it came time to try alternative takes and improvise, not everyone was as comfortable as Vaughn. "Vince would encourage the other cast members like, 'I'll set you up if you say this. It will be funny,'" recalled Lawrence.

Ronald Peet, who plays a fisherman named Neville whose storyline runs concurrent to Vaughn's, said he had to grow accustomed to having freedom to deviate from the script.

"Every day I showed up to work, I was doing something that, you know, my mind was like, 'I don't know how I'm going to do this,' said Peet. "That's how you grow, and that's how you expand, so I feel grateful." □

Associated Press

Madonna to celebrate 66th birthday with a visit to the famed archaeological site at Pompeii



Madonna performs in the final show of her The Celebration Tour, on Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on May 4, 2024.

Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Madonna will celebrate her 66th birthday with a private evening tour of the famed Italian archaeological site at Pompeii, officials said.

Naples Prefect Michele Di Bari denied Italian media speculation the singer was planning a big birthday bash at the ancient city, destroyed in A.D. 79 when Mount Vesuvius erupted. But he confirmed Madonna was planning a private evening tour on Friday that was purely cultural in nature.

"She loves Pompeii, loves the archaeological park, and can't wait to come," he told reporters Tuesday.

For decades, archaeologists have been excavating the ruins of Pompeii, regularly uncovering beautifully preserved fres-

coes, pottery and, just this week, a new set of human remains.

Madonna, whose family hails from Italy's Abruzzo region, has been in Italy for several days, reportedly as a guest of designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana. On Tuesday evening, she was filmed taking an evening walk in the Ligurian resort of Portofino wearing black lace and carrying an umbrella. She later dined with her two daughters and entourage at Portofino's famous Piny Restaurant on the main piazza.

Madonna ended her respective "Celebration Tour" in May with a free concert on Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro. An email to Madonna's publicist was not immediately returned. □

WNBA rookie stars Clark, Reese take advantage of Olympic break to reset for sprint to playoffs

By MICHAEL MAROT

AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Caitlin Clark took full advantage of her snub by the U.S. Olympic team.

She visited Mexico, attended a friend's wedding in Iowa, and even got to see the New York Yankees' clubhouse. So, when the Indiana Fever star returned to practice Tuesday, she was rested, revived and revved up to restart the WNBA season.

For Clark and the rest of this year's remarkable rookie class, the nearly monthlong Olympic break was a welcome and perhaps necessary respite before for the final sprint to the playoffs.

"Oh yeah, I think it was very helpful just to reset," Clark said.

"Coming in here, I didn't know my teammates very well and you're just kind of tossed out on the court, trying to figure each other out.

I think you can tell I'd gotten more comfortable over the last few games heading into the break, so I was



WNBA basketball player Caitlin Clark and Texas Rangers Josh Jung are photographed before a baseball double header game between the New York Yankees and the Texas Rangers, Saturday, Aug. 10, 2024 in New York.

Associated Press

kind of like 'Oh, I need the break.'"

Clark was hardly alone in her assessment.

In Chicago, coach Teresa Weatherspoon acknowledged her two rookie stars

Angel Reese of LSU and Kamilla Cardoso of South Carolina, both NCAA champions came back re-energized after enduring an unprecedented whirlwind for almost a full year.

From the moment college practices opened last fall, these rookies played under a white-hot glare rarely experienced in women's basketball nightly sellout crowds, soaring ticket prices

on secondary markets, record-breaking television ratings and their own incessant desire to live up to growing expectations.

"You talk about those two, especially coming from the college level, they just went year-round and the body needs a break," Weatherspoon said.

"You want the body to have that break to remain productive."

With only eight days between the NCAA championship game and the WNBA draft and two more weeks before the start of training camp, the fast pace continued into their pro careers.

Fans debated what long-term impact these women could have on the sport while salaries, endorsement deals, chartered flights and, yes, even the Olympic selections continued to fuel interest in the sport.

In mid-May, the rookies began a 40-game regular season one made all the more challenging by a modified schedule, compressed because of the long break. □

Vikings rookie QB J.J. McCarthy to miss season following right knee surgery to repair torn meniscus

By TOM WITHERS AP

Sports Writer

BEREA, Ohio (AP) — J.J. McCarthy's rookie year with the Minnesota Vikings is already over.

The former Michigan star quarterback and first-round NFL draft pick will miss the season after undergoing surgery on his right knee, which he injured in his pre-season debut last week.

McCarthy had the operation on Wednesday to repair a torn meniscus suffered at some point against Las Vegas. McCarthy had been having a solid training camp and had been expected to back up starter Sam Darnold, who signed a one-year, \$10 million contract with Minnesota in March.

Vikings coach Kevin O'Connell delivered the news on McCarthy shortly

after the team arrived for two days of joint practices with the Browns.

O'Connell said McCarthy, the 10th overall pick in the draft after leading the Wolverines to a national title, checked all the boxes over the past few months. He said the team is excited about McCarthy's future.

"He's confirmed a lot of things that not just myself, but a lot of people and J.J. himself needed to confirm," O'Connell said. "He's done that. Now he just has to work through this process, so that when his time does come, he's healthy and he gets to take the reins of this thing." McCarthy went 11 of 17 for 188 yards with two touchdowns and one interception against the Raiders. The 21-year-old told the team his knee was sore after the game and the me-

niscus tear was diagnosed by imaging tests.

The Vikings initially hoped McCarthy would only miss a month while acknowledging they wouldn't know for certain until he had surgery.

"I'm the most crushed for J.J.," O'Connell said.

Nick Mullens will be Minnesota's No. 2 quarterback. The 29-year-old started three games for Minnesota last year, when the Vikings' season was derailed by an

injury to starting quarterback Kirk Cousins and the team cycled through multiple backups.

"He's not just another capable guy in that quarterback room," O'Connell said. "He is providing context, experience and understanding of our offense on a daily basis. His experience last year was critical. I think he learned that he could be an explosive driver of our offense and also had some lessons of taking care of the football and trying to make sure we're playing aggressively but not over the line by putting the ball at risk of being turned over.

"The team is excited about Nick because like many of us we've gone through the ups and downs but he's in a position to really be a guy we can rely on and be a snap away." □



Minnesota Vikings quarterback J.J. McCarthy (9) throws against the Las Vegas Raiders during the first half of an NFL football game Saturday, Aug. 10, 2024, in Minneapolis.

Associated Press

Witt homers on shoulder-high pitch, Royals beat Twins 4-1 to avoid sweep

By PHIL ERVIN
Associated Press
MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Bobby Witt Jr. homered on a pitch outside the strike zone for the fourth time this season and Paul DeJong finished a triple short of the cycle, helping the Kansas City Royals beat the Minnesota Twins 4-1 Wednesday to avoid a series sweep. Witt homered into the left-center bullpen on a shoulder-high, full-count fastball from Louie Varland (0-5) in the third inning, putting the Royals ahead 2-0 with his 24th home run this season. The pitch was 4.07 feet above the ground, the highest hit by a Kansas City player for a home run



Kansas City Royals' Bobby Witt Jr., right, celebrates his solo home run with Vinnie Pasquantino, left, during the third inning of a baseball game against the Minnesota Twins, Wednesday, Aug. 14, 2024, in Minneapolis.

Associated Press

since pitch tracking started in 2008, according to MLB Statcast.

Witt leads the major leagues with a .349 average.

DeJong doubled in the second inning and scored on Kyle Isbel's groundout, singled in the fourth and homered in the sixth. DeJong reached 20 homers for the first time since hitting a career-high 30 for St. Louis in 2019, when he was an All-Star.

Cole Ragans (10-7) struck out eight and walked none in seven innings, allowing one run and five hits. He has won three straight starts for the first time as a major leaguer.

Mixing 20 changeups, 12 knuckle-curves, 11 sliders and nine cutters with 54 fastballs that averaged 95.3 mph, the All-Star retired 13 of his first 15 batters and his final six. He gave up Carlos Santana's fourth-inning homer on a changeup, then stranded the bases loaded in the fifth when Royce Lewis grounded out. Lucas Erceg induced two groundouts and a popup in a 13-pitch outing for his fifth save in eight chances. Kansas City (66-55) is in position for the third AL wild card berth while the Twins (67-53) are on track for the second wild card spot. The Royals are 3-7 against the Twins this season and 14-28 against Minnesota since 2022.

Varland gave up three runs and eight hits in six innings, remaining winless since Sept. 12. He was recalled from St. Paul by the Twins, who optioned right-hander Josh Winder to the Triple-A club.

Vinnie Pasquantino added an RBI double in the seventh on a 100.3 mph pitch from Jhoan Duran.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Royals: INF Michael Massey (back tightness) didn't play.

Twins: Manager Rocco Baldelli said OF Byron Buxton will likely remain out of the lineup "not a long while, but a little while." □



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